

REMARKS BY DR. EDNA SAFFY ON THE HISTORY OF  
THE JACKSONVILLE WOMEN'S NETWORK  
DELIVERED TO NEW MEMBERS NOVEMBER 8, 2000

So it began with the letter I have just handed you.

Pat Basford, Roseanne Hartwell, and I attended that meeting in Tampa and there met the women who were the leaders of the 1970's—political leaders, businesswomen, well known women, women whose names were known statewide—all in the setting of a luncheon at the Tower Club of Tampa. The Tower Club, a place that only recently had allowed these Tampa women to become members.

Think back to those times. In Jacksonville, the University Club was the only private club to allow women membership. Not the River Club, nor the Yacht Club, nor Timaquanna, nor the Seminole, etc. etc. Why women were not even allowed to join the Civitan Club or Rotary!

Women earned \$.57 for each \$1.00 men earned. Delores Pass was the only local woman who was president of a large business. Few women were members of the larger law firms since women had been admitted on an equal basis to the University of Florida Law School only during that decade.

The “right to choose”... Woman's right to a legal abortion had only become a **choice** five years earlier.

We needed to talk to women from the public sector, women from the home front, women in business, in banking, in politics. Have a cocktail party (you remember cocktail parties). What about money needed to put together an organization? What about all this paper work, What about all the time we have to commit. Which women do we ask? Who do you know that is an effective woman? A well known woman? A woman for women?

And she must be well thought of. She must be well placed. Must be successful. Not too radical, though. And she must be a woman "around whom other women rally".

The four of us, Pat Basford, Cecilia Bryant, Roseanne Hartwell, and Edna Saffy, we worked hard, we found the time, we did the paperwork, we underwrote the cost, and we were committed, and we found the wonderful women.

Oh, but we made organizational mistakes early on. We thought the four of us could act as a group presidency. That didn't work. We were drowning in paperwork. Then we had a brilliant idea! Cecilia Bryant was the attorney for Voyage Insurance and she was the only one among the four of us who had a secretary; consequently the four of us decided Cecilia would become the first president of the Network.

At first, the four of us acted as an Executive Committee and one of our duties was membership. That didn't last long either. Now the women in the various membership classifications make those decisions. We learned and the Network grew and flourished.

And the big issue of the day...The one that was the initial reason for the letter: The Equal Rights Amendment.

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied  
or abridged by the United States or any other state  
on account of sex.

Of course there were multiple organization attempting to pass the ERA in Florida--groups like the National Organization for Women, the National Women's Political Caucus, Church Women United, and Planned Parenthood, but success did not seem eminent.

So the call came "to draw together a group of women who are not considered radical feminists, who can discuss women's issues with males without raising their hackles..."

(Please understand that I considered myself one of those radical feminists; however, I was intrigued by the letter.)

After the Tampa meeting, Linda Hanna (remember her name from the letter) contacted Cecilia Bryant and invited her to participate; and so now we became four. And the work started.

Now twenty-two years later, we now stand over 238 women strong. Our membership includes county judges, circuit judges, U.S. Appeals judges, City councilwomen, congresswomen, attorneys, academics, physicians, stockbrokers (a.k.a. financial consultants), presidents of corporations, presidents of businesses, business owners, executive directors, public relations directors, media women, college presidents, authors, and athletes.

We met the call of the 1978 letter from Tampa. For we have created a network of Jacksonville women. We have united a group of women leaders. And we welcome you this afternoon into that membership.

CHARTER MEMBERSHIP OF THE JACKSONVILLE WOMEN'S NETWORK

FEBRUARY, 1980

*Feb 22  
Jed Vient  
March 10  
Sally Fort  
5:30  
27.50  
250  
8 10*

Founders: Cecilia Bryant, Rosanne Hartwell, Edna Saffy, Ph.D.

Beth Ayers

The Honorable Susan Black

Sarah Bowers

The Honorable Virginia Beverly

Susan Bridges

Beverly Brandenburger

Doris Carson, M.D.

Jean Coker

Pat Cowdery, M.D.

Tillie Fowler

Nancie Crabb

Anne Grimes

Mary Dunlap

Bonnie Hamm

Jeanne Lurie

Sharon Laird

Kathy Manzella

Martha McGee

Carol Miner

The Honorable Dorothy Pate

Leanne Osburne

Jeanne Patterson

Nancy Overton

Suwannee Schmoe

Margaret Wiegand

Dianne Sorrell

Carol Witten

Blakeley Waite

Janice Young

(Compiled by Edna Saffy, December, 2000)